### The Impact of Workplace Violence
**Workplace Violence Prevention and Response Guidelines**
**ASIS International, September, 2005**

While there is no precise measure of the full extent and cost of violence in the workplace, it clearly represents a major challenge, affecting an estimated 1.7 million employees directly and millions more indirectly every year. Similarly, the benefit of improved violence prevention measures in the workplace cannot be calculated with precision, since there is no way to count or measure the cost of incidents that have been prevented. As a general rule, however, it is beyond reasonable dispute that the costs associated with prevention will be lower than the costs that violence exacts in the form of lost production and earnings, disrupted business activity, damaged morale, and medical and legal expenses.

A violent act in the workplace affects more than just the person or persons who are directly threatened or harmed. It affects the entire workforce, damaging the sense of community and trust and employees' confidence that they will be safe while doing their jobs. In this sense, everyone in the organization is harmed when violence occurs, and, correspondingly, everyone shares in the benefits when violence is prevented. Everyone carries, too, the obligation to keep the workplace safe and violence-free

The term ''workplace violence'' most often conjures up frightening images of disgruntled or deranged workers who unleash deadly shooting sprees harming multiple victims—the kind of events that periodically appear in newspaper headlines and national TV news reports. Such headlines may have helped create a national awareness of workplace violence. But by focusing on one of its rarest forms – multiple homicides by former or current employees – media accounts may also have obscured the true breadth and magnitude of this costly and widespread problem. Workplace homicides are committed by non-employees much more often than by coworkers, and other forms of workplace violence are vastly more common than homicide. For the great majority of employers, dealing with workplace violence means tackling aggressive harassment, threats, non-fatal assaults, and other conduct that raises a concern for the safety of people or property.

*NOAA Satellite & Information Service Workplace Violence Prevention Program*